

Management Tools

A recently-formed company, AVYX, Inc., Englewood, Colorado has introduced a new programming language for IBM and IBM-compatible computers. Called TREES-pls (right), it is a resource management tool that can be used in such applications as scheduling, resource allocation, project control, information management and artificial intelligence.

TREES-pls is a NASA spinoff and so, in fact, is AVYX, Inc. This is one of many examples wherein not only a product line but the company itself owes its existence to aerospace technology transfer. TREES-pls is a commercially-available microprocessor version of a programming language originally developed for NASA use. AVYX is an offshoot of Information Sciences, Inc. (ISI), formed in 1981 to provide computer-related services to NASA and other government agencies, such as computerized activity scheduling and the application of artificial intelligence to complex resource management problems. ISI technology is currently being used for scheduling Space

Shuttle flights, which will resume next year, for deep space tracking network activities, and for designing operational concepts for communications satellites.

In 1984, co-founders John Willoughby and Jo Anne Gardner saw a commercial market for the technology and services ISI had been providing NASA: developing advanced tools for more efficient management of resources—people, dollars, machines—by industry. They created a common logical architecture that can be applied to solving any type of activity scheduling problem and founded AVYX. ISI has become the research and development arm of AVYX and TREES-pls is the first commercial product of the new firm.

AVYX activity scheduling tools seek to maximize utilization of resources, eliminate industrial bottlenecks and curb idle time ex-

penses. What industry needs instead of the costly one-of-a-kind solutions to activity scheduling problems employed in the past, says AVYX president John Willoughby, is "a flexible tool that can be applied to many problems with minimal adaptation. TREES-pls is a cost-effective answer; it can save up to 80 percent of programming costs."

Willoughby adds that "TREES-pls and future AVYX products are most appropriate for industries and companies that are incurring significant resource management costs." Among the non-government markets AVYX is initially targeting are aerospace, other manufacturing, transportation, health care, food and beverage, and professional services. ▲

